setting up of rescue camps with doctors staff and sufficient stocks of medicines, fanning out of trained Hamlet Voluntary Workers into the tribal hamlets for disigecting drinking water, providing emergency services and increasing the supply of supplementary nutrition provided for children and lactating mothers under the ICDS Programme. Further, disbursement of consumption finance in the area was also ensured. Many long-term measures are also envisaged, such as regular Health check-ups in schools are Anganwadis, training of Anganwadi workers in Primary health care by the Health Department and supply of medicine kit to them, installation of incubators with attandant staff in every Public health Centre of the affected Dharni and Chikkaldhara blocks of Amravati district, community social work through NGOs and imparting of health education in the local tribal languages to the tribals by a District Health Education Team.

Price Hike of Rice due to Hike in Petrol and Diesel Prices

1754. PROF. NAUNIHAL SINGH: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether consumers will end up at least 20% more for basmati and non-basmati rice becasue of the hike in petrol and diesel prices;

(b) if so, the measures taken to cope with the situation;

(c) whether land freight costs will rise by around 50% with immediate effect, which will have to be passed on to the rice consumers;

(d) whether most rice mills running on diesel generator sets will further add to the cost; and

(e) if so, the steps contemplated by Government to protect the consumers?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) to (e) The annual rise in the Wholesale Price of rice as on 16.11.1996 was 10 per cent. The increase is ascribed to a number of factors the most important of which is the increase in the minimum support price of rice, market conditions of supply and demand, as also export demand for rice since all restrictions on exports for both non-basmati and basmati rice have been withdrawn. Increase in the price of petroleum products would have impact on freight cost of rice marketed through non-PDS channels. The impact will however be very limited as the increase in the price of petroleum products on the general price level has only been about 1.2 per cent. Rice distributed through PDS will however remain unaffected as Ministry of Railways have exempted it from the 10% increase in freight w.e.f. 1.8.1996.

Losses suffered by SAIL due to large inventory

1755. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that SAIL has not been disposing off its inventory resulting into huge loss;

(b) the reasons for not selling the same at the competitive price;

(c) whether SAIL has conducted any survey of the ongoing sluggish demand of steel; and

(d) if so, the method devised to meet the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL & MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) to (d) No, Sir. SAIL is making continuous efforts to increase sales and check the trend of rising inventory. SAIL has adopted a market driven policy and is offering various facilities/dispensations to achieve growth in sales and is fixing

prices according to market requirement, which involves offering different terms and prices to different market segments and customers, as also matching the prices and facilities being offered by the competitors etc.

SAIL is continuously in touch with customers/market and analysing the demand/market potential, by studying demand pattern of steel on end use and market segment approach method. It is a continuous ongoing process. To meet the situation different strategies are adopted from time to time which include vigorous customers contact and follow-up of individual customer orders for effecting speedier delivery, orienting product-mix to suit market needs and adjusting production as per market requirements, arranging stock transfer from one branch to another to meet requirements of various customers, improving after sale service, expediting refunds and settlement of quality/commercial complaints, adopting strategic pricing depending upon market segment, competition and quantity linked bulk purchases, and maximising exports of some categories to bring down the stock levels etc.

Role of Tobacco Board in enhancing tobacco exports

1756. SHRI V. HANUMATHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the present role of the Tobacco Board in enhancing tobacco exports from Andhra Pradesh;

(b) whether it is a fact that adequate finances have not been made available for the Tobacco Board to properly increase Indian Virginia tobacco exports; and

(c) the steps proposed to adequately finance the Tobacco Board's export promotion activities, with details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) Some of the steps taken by Tobacco Board to enhance production, productivity and quality of Tobacco to enhance exports are:

(i) Supply of seeds/seedings of high yielding and disease resistant varieties of FCV/Burley tobacco;

(ii) Pest and disease control through fumigation of nurseries;

(iii) Encouraging use of sprinkler irrigation system;

(iv) Improving curing and storing facilities;

(v) Arranging supply of inputs such as coal (for curing), fertilisers, and suckercides, and

(vi) training and exposure of farmers to latest research findings.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Delicensing of electronic industry

1757. SHRI S. MUTHU MANI: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government took any action to delicense the entertainment electronic industry;

(b) if so, the items to be delicensed; and

(c) the industries which are subject to compulsory licensing under the Industries Development Regulation (IDR) Act, 1951?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government have delicensed all items of entertainment electronic industry.